

Welcome to New Members at Immanuel

With grateful joy we welcome you to our church family here at Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church of rural Courtland!

As a congregation, we represent many walks of life with members of multiple interests and gifts shared in our Church and in our Community.

We have several organizations and groups so that we may enjoy Christian fellowship, grow together in Christ, and share Christian service with one another. We gather together with Christ Jesus as our Lord and Savior at the center of our heart and life. We offer instruction, encouragement, consolation, comfort, and hope from the Word of God for needs both spiritual and physical.

If you come as a stranger, you soon become a precious friend. We value your presence in our Immanuel family of faith!

May you enjoy the quiet of the country and the peace and joy of worship in a rural setting where our concern is to honor the Lord in our worship, receive His gifts, and grow to be more Christ-like in faith and character. Immanuel is not here as a social club, just for entertainment or to follow the latest fad or fashion.

We trust you will soon feel very much at home with us here at Immanuel. Please do not hesitate to call Pastor or to talk with other members with any questions or concerns you may have. We want to help you grow!

God bless our life together as we gather often as His people to hear and study His Word, as we fellowship together, as we worship and share the Lord's Supper, and pray with and for each other.

"Immanuel" means "God with us." May God be with you!

Immanuel Evangelism Committee

A Brief History of Immanuel Lutheran Church & School

The congregation of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church of Courtland Township, Nicollet County, Minnesota, was founded in 1859 by several German-speaking homesteaders from Illinois. The congregation joined the Missouri Synod (LC-MS) in 1871.

A stately white church building was constructed 3 miles southeast of Courtland in 1881. The Vogelpohl-Spaeth pipe organ was installed in 1895. In 1964 the church was renovated and the narthex was built on the south side of the church. A new parsonage for the Pastor was built in 1974.

In October of 2004, Immanuel Voters voted to build a new church, due to a rotting steeple and sills in the 1881 structure. A new building was constructed in 2006 with a beautiful sanctuary, attached social hall, classrooms and offices and was dedicated on June 3, 2007.

The congregation at Immanuel has always taken Christian education of its youth seriously. The first Immanuel School opened in 1864. For several years, the congregation operated three parochial schools. Later, these three districts were consolidated, and in 1949 the present school building was erected one-fourth mile west of the church. This was originally a three-room schoolhouse. The gym was added in 1979, the kitchen in 1982, an additional classroom in 1986, and a portable classroom in 1999. A new teacherage was built in 1993.

We are thankful and proud to know that many of God's people have received their training at Immanuel Lutheran School and Church!

Schedules and Times of Services

Worship Schedule:

Regular Every Sunday Worship is at 9:30 a.m.

Holy Communion is celebrated on the 1st and 3rd Sundays.

There is also a Saturday evening Communion service the Saturdays before the 1st and 3rd Sundays at 6:30 p.m., except in the winter months of December, January, and February where a service is only on the first Saturday.

Holiday Worship Schedules:

Lenten Services are Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday and Good Friday: 6:30 p.m.

Easter Sunrise Service at 7:00 a.m. Easter Festival: 9:30 a.m.

Thanksgiving Day: 9:30 a.m.

The Two Children's Christmas Programs: as scheduled yearly

Christmas Day: 9:30 a.m. with Communion

New Year's Eve Service at 5:30 p.m.

Junior Confirmation is held on Palm Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

Finances

Each communicant member or married couple receives a set of offering envelopes. These funds go into the general budget, unless designated for missions, building fund, or another fund. Our giving is to be motivated by God's grace and to be generous and joyful, in proportion to His blessings.

One-half of the loose plate offerings are sent to District for District and Synod Missions. The other half is used for our School; our main mission.

From time to time special door offerings are taken for specific purposes.

Members who wish to be buried in our Cemetery are asked to pay cemetery dues, which are \$5.00 per year per communicant member.

Key Lutheran Beliefs and Practices

- A. **The Bible** (all 66 books of the Old & New Testaments) is inspired by God the Holy Spirit and is completely true and trustworthy. The Holy Bible is the source of all our beliefs and practices in the Lutheran Church.
- B. **The main message of the Bible is Jesus Christ**, the God-man who came to our earth, born of the Virgin Mary. He came to reveal God to us and to reconcile us back to God by His redeeming death on the cross. He rose gloriously from the dead on the third day (Easter). Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation—the only way for us to be forgiven and enter heaven. We worship Him as the second person of the Holy Trinity and as our God and Lord. He is also our Good Shepherd who gives us life in its fullness here and eternal life hereafter.
- C. The Bible contains the message of both **Law and Gospel**. God's holy **Law** commands us concerning what God's will for us is—what we should do and not do. The Law also condemns us for failing to do God's will perfectly. The Law cannot save us. The **Gospel** is the good news of God's acceptance, love, forgiveness, and salvation in Jesus Christ. Christians need to hear the message of both Law and Gospel, although the Gospel is what gives us the power to live out the Christian life, and therefore must predominate in our preaching and teaching.
- D. The Three **Christian Creeds** (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian), while not found in the Bible, are important summaries of the Bible's teaching about God. God is Triune—one God expressed and revealed in three persons. God is the **Father** who created us and cares for our needs. Jesus is God the **Son** who died and rose to save us from our sins. The **Holy Spirit** inspired the Bible and interprets it to us. The Spirit enables us to believe, gathers us in God's Church, and works through God's Word to make us holy, just as He is holy.
- E. The **Holy Christian Church** is the sum total of all true (genuine) believers in Christ. All believers, but only believers, are part of this Church. Every denomination contains hypocrites as well as true believers. We are to remain faithful to that denomination that teaches God's Word purely and administers the Sacraments according to Christ's institution.

- F. Lutherans have **two Sacraments**: Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. In **Baptism**, we are united to Christ and become members of His family of faith in the Christian Church. Christians should remember their baptism each day: that we belong to God and are His beloved children. We are to die daily to sins and evil desires and are to live the new life of faith that expresses itself in love, for God's greater glory.
- G. Confirmed Lutherans make it a priority to receive **the Lord's Supper** frequently—at least once a month. The Lord's Supper is not just a symbol—it is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine for us Christians to eat and to drink. Properly eating and drinking our Lord's body and blood strengthens our faith and our union with God and with one another. It also assures us of God's forgiveness.
- H. **Salvation** is by God's grace, not by our keeping God's Law or doing good works. We cannot save ourselves. We are saved by trusting Christ Jesus as our Savior and Lord. Christians perform **good works**, not in order to gain salvation, but as an expression or fruit of our Christian faith.
- I. God desires us to grow in our faith and in godly living throughout our life. The theological term for this is "**sanctification.**" Faith is nurtured by the regular hearing and study of God's Word, in worship, by receiving the Lord's Supper, and through Christian fellowship.
- J. As Christians, we never reach perfection this side of heaven. We still **daily sin much** and deserve God's wrath and punishment. The three enemies of our souls are the devil, the ungodly world, and our own sinful flesh. God wants us to live in victory, yet we often stumble and fall into sin. In **confession**, we humbly confess our sins, admitting our shortcomings and failings. In the **absolution**, we hear God's gracious word of pardon for our sins. Lutherans also practice private confession and absolution, but this is done on a voluntary basis.
- K. God has given us the important task of **making disciples** (believers in the Triune God and faithful followers of Christ) of all nations. We do this as we carry the Gospel to all, baptizing and also teaching God's people to know and do all He has commanded us. No one can do this great task alone. This is why we need to be an active part of a Christian congregation so we can do this great work together. Denominations like the LC-MS can also be involved in world-wide mission endeavors.

- L. Jesus Christ will return on the Last Day (**Judgment Day**) to judge both the living and the dead. Believers in Christ will go to **heaven** to live in joy and glory with God, the angels, and the saints forever. Those who refuse to repent and believe in Jesus will be condemned to a painful, eternal **hell**, separated from God's presence. God does not want to send anyone to hell. But there is no other option for those who reject God's provision of a Savior in Jesus.
- M. God expects us to be **faithful and loving** to our spouse and family. We are to be good citizens, obedient to the civil government, unless they command us to act contrary to God's will. He expects us to be conscientious, dedicated workers in whatever vocation (calling or work) He has given us. God promises to reward His faithful servants.
- N. Children, especially, are to be **taught the Christian faith**. Parents are primarily responsible for this spiritual training and nurture. Children of all ages should regularly worship with their parents. Christian Day Schools are a major blessing to aid parents in their duty of raising their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, and Christian Camps are also important tools to assist in this task. Parents, and especially fathers, are to lead their family in table prayers and in daily devotions.
- O. Christians are God's stewards who are to use the gifts and opportunities God has entrusted to them to help the Church of God to grow. Among the **talents and gifts** we share are our time, our leadership and serving abilities, our money, our prayers, our Christian witness, singing and musical gifts, and Christian encouragement.
- P. Christians are people of prayer. **Prayer** is communing with God or communicating with Him in words and thoughts. All prayers are to be addressed to the Triune God. He alone is God and will certainly hear and help us. We pray in the name of Jesus, because He has opened the way to God for us. We should also not forget to praise God for His many attributes (qualities) and thank Him for His many gracious blessings to us. The Lord's Prayer is a model prayer to pray, as we remember to pray for both spiritual and physical blessings from God.

Societies at Immanuel

Societies may be organized within the congregation with the expressed approval of the Voters and all societies shall be under the supervision of the Pastor(s) and the appropriate administrative board under whose jurisdiction they function.

Present societies are as follows:

Youth: ICY (Immanuel Christian Youth). Their purpose is to promote Christian fellowship, Bible Study, Recreation, and Service to the Church at home and at large. Youth from grades 5-12 are urged to participate.

Men: Immanuel Men's Club is a member of the International Lutheran Laymen's League of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Its purpose is to promote the Gospel ministry of Jesus Christ. Christian fellowship, education, and Christian service are integral to this group of dedicated men. They normally meet the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

Women: The Immanuel-Lites is a group that meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. They meet for Bible Study, fellowship, and service to the congregation and beyond. They are affiliated also with the LWML (Lutheran Women's Missionary League). They work on mission projects for local, national, and international needs as the group decides.

Parents: The P.T.L. (Parent-Teachers League) is for all parents of school children and their teachers. Meetings are held in September, November, January, March, and May, usually on the third Wednesday. Immanuel P.T.L. sponsors a pork chop dinner on a Sunday in September or October. All parents assist in providing food and serving it. The P.T.L. also sponsors a boys and girls basketball tournament on a weekend in January or February.

Service Groups at Immanuel

The Ladies Choir was begun for the sole purpose of praising God and sharing His Word through music for any ladies, young and older, who love to sing. They enjoy singing for services, for shut-ins, and occasionally for funerals.

The Men's Choir has a rich tradition of excellence dating back to its founding in 1923. The Men's Choir is a wonderful opportunity for men to serve the Lord with their talents in music. It is open to all confirmed men of the congregation. They also go Christmas caroling early in December to the shut-ins. They frequently sing a song or two at funerals at Immanuel.

The Youth Handbell Choir works through Immanuel Lutheran School (ILS) and generally performs one Sunday each month during school months.

Any member, couple, or group at Immanuel is strongly invited and urged to sing in arrangement with the Pastor and Worship Committee.

The Worship Committee consists of the lead organist, the AV person, and the Pastor. They plan the service order and hymns for each service. On occasion, other members have participated on this committee.

Greeters are scheduled by our Evangelism Committee to greet for each worship service at Immanuel. Normally, a family unit greets one service a year. A schedule is printed on the bulletin board, on the monthly calendar, and in the bulletin.

Altar Service is open to all members of the congregation (individuals or couples of husband/wife, mother/daughter, sisters, and friends). This important work includes caring for the flowers, changing paraments as scheduled, and assisting with cleaning the communion ware. Two people serve each month.

Funeral Committees: All adult ladies of Immanuel are assigned to a funeral committee which serves lunches after funerals at Immanuel. Six groups rotate these duties, so each member gets to serve about once a year.

Christian Education at ILS (Immanuel Lutheran School)

Our Immanuel Christian Day School, founded in 1864, is managed and operated by Immanuel Lutheran Congregation. Our teachers have been trained in Lutheran schools. Immanuel School exists to assist parents in training up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Children from the congregation are strongly urged to attend ILS. The school also welcomes children from our community who may not belong to Immanuel congregation. There is a modest **tuition** for members of Immanuel and for members of Redeemer in New Ulm, our sister congregation. Non-member families pay a slightly higher tuition rate. There are tuition caps for larger families.

It is the express purpose of Immanuel Lutheran School to provide a **quality education** in all subjects and to apply the Word of God to each subject and all areas of the students' lives.

We have **6 classrooms** at ILS: Preschool 3's & 4's, Kindergarten, 1st & 2nd grade, 3rd & 4th grade, 5th and 6th grade, and 7th and 8th grade.

Our **Principal** is also the 7th & 8th grade teacher.

For **transportation**, students can be brought to school by their parents. Nicollet and New Ulm school districts also provide bus transportation to ILS.

Sports: Sports play an important role in our life at ILS. Basketball for boys and girls is for 4th grade and up. Volleyball, soccer, and softball are also played.

Gym cleanup: All school parents are scheduled to help clean the gym at one time or another during the school year.

School Picnic: A potluck is held on the evening of the last day of school. Awards are presented for various activities students have participated in during the year. A carnival follows with fun and food for all.

Christian Education in the Congregation Besides our School

Adult Bible Classes: We seek to provide opportunities for all members of the congregation and their friends to increase their knowledge of God's precious Word and to grow in their faith. These opportunities occur whenever there is a group that wishes to meet together. The Pastor either leads the group, or he is their spiritual advisor. Studies are held in the following groups.

During **Immanuel-Lites** and **Men's Club** monthly meetings.

On **Sunday mornings** after service. Studies include Bible books, characters, and doctrines. Video resources are sometimes utilized. Group involvement with questions and comments are highly prized.

There is a **Ladies Bible Study** that meets either at Church or in member homes.

We have a **Bible School** that meets on Wednesday evenings from 6:00-7:00 P.M. This is in place of our former Sunday School that used to meet Sunday mornings. Children aged 3 through 6th grade enjoy this time of learning!

Vacation Bible School is held one week during the summer, usually in July. It is for members and non-members aged 3 through 6th grade.

Confirmation Class for those 7th and 8th grade students not enrolled in ILS is on Wednesday evenings during the school year from 6:00-7:30 p.m. These sessions are led by the Pastor and cover the Bible and Luther's Small Catechism.

Adult Classes for those of a non-Lutheran background are held occasionally whenever there is interest by a person or several individuals who wish to explore Lutheran teachings and possibly become members of Immanuel.

Baptisms: Baptisms are normally held within the regular worship services of the Church, so that all may rejoice in the grace God bestows in Baptism. Pastor meets with the parents beforehand to get information and also to review the theology of Baptism and to answer any questions parents may have. Sponsors for baptisms are required to be of the Lutheran faith. Other non-Lutheran "sponsors" are designated as "witnesses" for the baptism.

Weddings at Immanuel

Your wedding day is certainly one of the most important days in your life, and your Church and Pastor are pleased to share this happy occasion with you. We want to do everything possible to make your wedding enjoyable and memorable and your marriage successful and happy.

The wedding ceremony is also a service of worship, whether it is conducted in the church sanctuary or elsewhere. As such, the service is to be Christ-centered and based on the living Word of God and the love of God in Christ.

Please do not plan any part of your wedding until you have consulted with the Pastor concerning availability of the date, location, and pastor.

Four pre-marriage sessions will discuss details of the wedding service, as well as the Bible's instructions about holy marriage, expectations, communication, conflicts, budgeting, true love, and the like.

If another LC-MS Pastor is to be involved, this invitation should be extended by the Pastor of Immanuel. This is proper courtesy. All musical and vocal selections will be approved by the Pastor as appropriate for a worship service.

The Pastor directs the rehearsal to see that the wedding will be held with good Christian taste and decorum. All behavior at the wedding should reverent and reflect the love Christ has for His Bride in the Christian Church.

The wedding service of worship leads us to have the glory of God uppermost in our minds and the receiving of His gracious blessing. This is the reason for the sacredness and godliness which is to surround persons and actions in the wedding service as well as in the preparations and at the rehearsal.

We certainly wish to invite Jesus to our wedding and into our marriage, for to omit or neglect Him would be a fatal error. When all else has faded, God's grace and blessing endure to sanctify the husband and wife who are united in Jesus' name.

Excerpts from Immanuel's Constitution

Membership: Baptized members of the congregation are those who have been baptized into the Christian faith in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Communicant Members are those who: are baptized; declare their acceptance and adherence to the Bible as God's Word in all its parts; are at least familiar with Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism and declare their acceptance of it; do not live in manifest works of the flesh, but lead Christian lives; attend public worship diligently, and if communicants, partake of the Lord's Supper frequently; adhere to the rules of the congregation, provided they are not contrary to the Word of God; permit themselves to be fraternally admonished when they have erred; are not members of any organization in conflict with the Confession of Faith laid down in Article II of the Articles of Incorporation; and contribute proportionately according to their ability as God has prospered them toward the support of the congregation in all its work.

Voting Members are those communicant members who are at least 18 years of age and who have declared their agreement with the Articles and By-Laws and have been accepted by the voting membership of the congregation.

Boards and Committees: In addition to the 5 **officers** of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Mission Treasurer, the voting members shall elect the following Boards and Committees: Board of Elders—3 members, Board of Trustees—4 members, Board of Education—3 members, Evangelism Committee—3 members, Stewardship Committee—3 members, Cemetery Committee—3 members, Finance Committee—3 members, Nominating Committee—5 members, and a Head Usher and Assistant Head Usher. The **Church Council** consists of 25 members plus the Pastor and Principal.

The voting members shall meet quarterly on the fourth Sundays of April, July, and October and for the Annual Meeting on the third Sunday of January.